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Account of a BOOK.

XI. *Nouveaux Memoires sur l'etat present de la Chine par le R. P. Louis le Comte de la Compagnie de Jesus, Mathematicien du Roy enrichi des figures, Amsterd. 1697. in 12° 2 Vol. and since Translated into English, and Printed in 8°.*

THIS Book contains several Letters inscribed to Persons of Quality ; the first gives an Account of the Voyage of the Author and other Missionaries from *Siam* to *Nimpo*, and from thence to *Pekin*, and of the several Accidents happened to them in their Voyage to *Nimpo* in *China*, a considerable Town in the Province of *Chekiam*, in a *Chinese* Veslel. He takes notice of two great faults of Geographers, one is the putting of the Province of *Leauton* within the *China* Wall (which, thô it always belong'd to *China*) certainly is without it. The other is, that they put the whole Empire of *China* 500 Leagues more East then really it is, this Error being Corrected by Observations made in the Eastern Coasts of it. Its extent is from *Canton* to *Pekin* N. & S. 18° or 450 Leagues, as much from E. to W. and near round in Figure ; so that 'tis near 1400 Leagues about : 55° are the Limits settled between *Muscovy* and *Tartary*, by the Treaty of Peace between those Kingdoms ; so that there is 900 Leagues (counting 25 to a Degree) of extent from the S. point of the Isle *Haynan* to the Extremity of *Tartary*, subject to *China*. He gives an Account of their Journey to *Pekin*, wherein he Remarks, that they met Ice in the Canals, and that the Rivers were Froze up.

The Second Letter gives an Account of Father *Verbiest* his Life and Death in *China*, and of their Reception by the Emperor at *Pekin.*

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The Third Treats of the Towns, Buildings, and considerable Works of *China*, where he tells us, that *Pekin* is six measured Leagues, about (3600 paces to each) that Houses are there one Story high, Two Millions of Inhabitants, being double to *Paris*; they are troubled here with Dust in Summer and Dirt in Winter; the King's Palace is large, the Observatory fitted with great Instruments, made by *Verbiest*, a Celestial Globe of Brass six Foot Diameter, being reputed the best, the Instruments generally are not exact; five People are perpetually Watching, one in the Zenith, and another to the North, a third South, a fourth East, and a Fifth West, to observe the Eclipses, Rains, Winds, Comets, &c. The Eclipses they think to be a Dragon devouring the Sun or Moon, &c. *China* Wall has stood 1800 Years, and is yet intire. He describes a large Tower and great Bells to be in *Nankin*, one of them eleven Foot high, the Diameter seven Foot, fifty thousand Weight, twice as large as that of *Erfort*, Founded three hundred Years since; seven at *Pekin*, eleven Foot Diameter, forty in Circuit, and twelve high, weighing One hundred and twenty thousand weight: By the strokes on these, with a wooden Mallet, they know the several Watches, or what a Clock 'tis. *Chensi* is, according to this Author, three Leagues about: Seven or eight Towns he saw bigger, or as big as *Paris*, and vast Numbers of lesser, thick or near one another, which made the *Chinese* believe themselves the only People, having no Trade but with *Japan* and *Tartary*; from the first of which they bring Copper, Gold, and Silver, in Exchange for Silks, Sugar, Drugs and Wine.

The Fourth Letter treats of the Climate, Earth, Canals, Rivers and Fruits of *China*, wherein he tells us, the *Chinese* endeavour to make their Ground level, as much as may be, to avoid the inconvenience of Drought or

or Moisture ; and that Woods, are in some Provinces, as also Mines of Iron, Tin, Copper, Mercury, Gold and Silver : That Provinces in the North, bear Wheat, Aarley, diverse sorts of Millets, Tobacco, Pease black and yellow, to fatten Horses in lieu of Oats ; Rice in the low Watry Countries, which is Sown without Order, but when two Foot high, is pulled up with the Roots and Planted by Handfuls or little Sheafs, that the Spikes may sustain one another against the Winds. Most Fruits of *Europe* are in *China*, but not so good, except Pome Granates, because not Grafted. He mentions little yellow Melons eat with the Rind, water Melons, with white and red Flesh which never do harm, *Letchi* a Fruit with a Chagrin Rind, *Lonjeu*, *Seze*, : *Ananas*, *Gojanes*, and *Cocos*. *China* Oranges, where he notes, that the Mother Tree of all *Europeans* is in *Comte St.Lauren's* Garden, near *Lisbon*, those esteemed in *China* are no bigger then a Billiard Ball, the larger are ; Roasted and Sugar put to them when cut, they give a Juice proper for the Breast ; they have Limons, Citrons, Pampelimonses, Limes, sharp for Ragousts, and excellent in Pots for Ornament : He speaks of a Tree bearing Tallow, which has three Seeds in every Fruit, as big as a Small Nut, covered with white Tallow, out of which the *Chinese*, with some Oyl make Candles ; they have no good Wicks to them, being Wood and Rushes ; a Tree bearing Pepper, differing from the Black, they use only the Rind of it. Several Roots there are for Nourishment ; many Canals, on which are high Bridges and some Sluces, Rushes ten or twelve Foot high in the River *Kiam*, very profitable for Firing. In *Kiam* the Isles change place so often, that they are measured once in three Years, for the Rights of the King, *Hoamho* another River from the Inundations, of which they are forced to preserve their Cities by Walls of Mud, it having Drowned in *Honan* Province 300000 Persons, the

Digne being cut by the King to destroy a Rebel therein fifty two Years since, and from thence the Country is become a Lake or Marsh, which they have not yet attempted Draining; bad Water, therefore drink it warm, they have Well Water saltish, Lakes very strange, with green Water, turning Iron into Copper, and another with blew Water, with which they dye, Crabs turn'd into Stone, in the Isle of *Hainan*, Gold and Silver Fishes kept there in Basins, which are hurt by much noise, great smells, or violent motion.

The Fifth treats of the particular Character of the *Chinese* Nation, their Antiquity, Nobility, Modes, good and bad Qualities, wherein we are told, that they are as white as us in the N. but by their being abroad, and not defended from the Sun are some Olive coloured. Nurses tie the Feet of the *Chinese* Girls so soon as Born, to hinder their Feet to grow; *China* Gold or Silver Thread, is Paper Silverd or Gilded over, covering the Silk, a Silk Worm Wild in the Woods, which is Gráy, esteemed much, Nettle Cloath made of the Shrub *Co*, which is creeping and prepared as Hemp.

The Sixth is of the Magnificence and Propriety of the *Chinese*, wherein we are told, that the Varnish is a Simple, the Gum of a Tree, and no Secret, nor known Composition: *China* Ware, or Porcelane made of a fine Earth and Water, the Earth is very hard, almost as soft Stone, which is separated from Sand or strange Earth, beaten to Dust, and made into Pots, which are afterwards Varnished over with some fine of the same, and Painted, and afterwards baked and cool'd leisurely; they have great Lanthorns twenty five Foot Diameter.

The Seventh is of the Language, Characters of the Books and Morals of the *Chinese*, in which he tells us, they have only 333 Words, all Monosyllables, which with a different Pronunciation, in five several Tones or Notes,

Notes, makes 1665. and by different Combinations with other Words, give a different Signification, which makes it difficult. They write Characters or Hieroglyphicks for Words, which are computed to 80000. tho' one knowing 15 or 20000 are counted Learned, write with a Pencil from top to bottom, and right Hand to left; double the Paper because of its sinking, and Grave when they Print, glew the Manuscripts to the Table, and so follow the strokes of the Writing. Their Paper is made of the inward Bark of *Bambou* and Alum, neither Cotton nor Silk, will make a fit paste for Paper, being eaten by Worms, the best Ink made of the Lamp-black, and of the Fat of Swine. The Emperour *Chioamti* 200 Years, *ante Christum*, burnt all Books but Agriculture, Physick and Sor-tileges, here is a large Account of *Confucius* and his Maxims.

The Eighth treats of the particular Character of the Knowledge of the *Chinese*, wherein he tells us, that tho' they have a general Knowledge of most Sciences, and Recompenses for those who succeed in new Inventions, they come far short of *Europeans*; they Number by a kind of *Abacus* (long since shown to the Society by Dr. *Hook*) Their Geometrie and Musique, are not perfect, Astronomy more; having 400 Observations of Eclipses, to reform their Chronologie; yet Religion has profited by setting their Calender right; they are great Astrologers for good and bad Days; the Emperour *Hoamti* composed a Treatise of Pulses, use four Fingers to feel them, by which they predict strangely, but abuse the People; they knew no Bleeding but from *Macao*, Cupping-glasses are call'd *Mordetchin*, and Cure by actual Cautery to the Feet; they have many Simples, and to each of them ascribe Virtues; 400 Herbs are design'd in Colours after the Emperours, for his Cabinet; Father *Visdelou* is Translating the *Chinese* Herbal; there is no Gravel, Stone, or Gout, or Sciatica in *China*; Tartars feeding on raw Flesh, use Tea, good for Indigestions and Head-achs; several sorts of

it, one like Mosse, the Author observ'd and describes it in *Fokien*. The *Ginsen*, or Humane Simple, from its resembling a Man, grows in *Leautom*, good in all Distempers of Weaknesses or Sincopes; half a Dram, in Infusion, Decoction or Calcin'd. They are better Artisans than Scholars, Gun-pouder, Printing, and Sea-Compasses, has been of all Ages us'd by them. Load-stones are commonly us'd in Physick; use much Navigation, Sails made of Mats, Anchors of Iron and Wood, Cables of Rotang Canes, very good Sailers in Rivers, especially Torrents, for which they have a kind of Well-Boats, Fish with a white Board, inviting the Fishes thither, and Cormorants too to each Fisher, they are good Traders, and Politicians.

Tome 2.

Letter First is of the Politique and Government of the *Chinese*, Cock-fighting common there, the Emperor has 288 Millions of Livres, French for Revenue 500000 Men in pay in War and Peace; they bea Criminals, some People there are, who live by taking this Punishment for Criminals, being beaten in their steads, they reward and punish, have no Nobility but Mandarins, never suffer Women to stir out, have great Commerce, their Months are Lunar, their Copper, base Silver and fine are taken by weight; Gold is no Coyn but Commodity with Silver, as 10 to 1, the same with ours, their Foot part more, Roads, some hang-ed in the Air as Galeries, suspended by Posts from the Rocks, great Dust in Roads, so they use Masks, Rice keeps several Years by being Winnowed, and reckoned better, wholomer, and more nourishing.

Second is of the Ancient and Modern Religion of the *Chinese*, they possessed a pure Religion or Worship of God 2000 Years, with Superstition of *L Laken* came Chymistry, and the Philosophers Stone, with a Drink search-ed after to make one immortal, which was the aim of many

many, by Magick, &c. He tells a Story of one of their Gods, who had promised Succour to one Sick, and receiving Money for it, the Person dying, was Prosecuted, and the Temple rased, believe their Gods in Monkies, Dragons or Elephants, &c.

The Third is of the Establishment and Progress of the Christian Religion in *China*, which our Author says was Preached by S. Thomas, he speaks of a Monument Erected in *China*, signifying the receipt of the Christian Religion there, about 636, in 782 it was Erected, this was forgot till *Xavier* arrived in 1552. after him *Ricci* the most considerable, he tells us, Grashoppers were removed there by Christians Prayers; the predictions of Missionaries were truer then *Chinese*. *Verbiest* founded Brass Guns for the *Chinese*, and got Credit to the Missionaries, which was lost by the contest between the Pope and K. of *Portugal*, about Apostolick Vicars and Bishops, so that the Bishop of *Heliopolis* going to *China*, and being drove to *Manilla*, is sent through *Mexico* home again, but goes again thither and dyes in *China*, he was Succeeded by others, and at last by six sent by *Lewis XIV.* instructed in Mathematisks. The Pope approves three *Portuguese* Bishops for *Pekin*, *Nankin* and *Macao*, and resolves to state and agree the several Interests there.

The Fourth Letter is of the manner each Missionary Preaches the Gospel in *China*, and servour of new Christians; a Peace was concluded at *Nipchou*, by means of one of the Fathers who went between the *Muscovites* and *Chinese*; Catechisms and many other Books of Devotion are printed in *China*, but neither Missal nor Bible, for important Reasons; Women once in 15 days are at Church, Monks live on Rice, Pease and Water. The *Chinese* are uneasie to believe the Mysteries of the Christians, and to do Justice required by them; They believe Christians Fools, because poor, many Wives and Concubines hinders also the progress of Religion, 200 Churches and Chappels, and 300000 Christians are in *Chin.*

Fifth, Is conceruing a new Edict approving the Christian Religion through all *China*, the Missionaries founded their desire on the great Services they had done the Empire in negotiating a Peace with *Muscovy*, helping them in Civil and Foreign Wars by founding Cannon, and in teaching them the *Calendar* and other parts of *Mathematicks*, on which they had an Order, that their Churches should not be more disturbed than the Lamas of the *Tartars*, or Bonzes of the *Chinese*.

Sixth, Is a general Idea of the Observations made in *China* and the *Indies*, for which end the Priests divided themselves into several Bodies to observe several things, the *Chinese* and *Indians* ignorant of Paralaxes, Longitudes were wrong plac'd, so as Eclipses did not answer at *Kamtchou*, one was in the latter end of April 1688. 11 digit and $\frac{1}{2}$ instead of total there was Light tho' $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Sun was obscured. Second Eclipse was observ'd by *F. Tachard*, and was Central, or had a Ring about it about a digit, which came from the greatness of the Suns disq; above that of the Moon. As to the Eclipses of the Moon wherein the Moderns finds much difficulty by paralaxes, &c. they surpriz'd the King of *Siam* with their nice Observations of that of the 11th of Decemb. 1685, they observ'd Two Comets, and their Motions as well as the Planets by Glasses; they observ'd *Mercury* in the Sun at Canton the 10th of Novemb. 1690, being a black spot which went thro' the Sun in 3 hours and $\frac{1}{2}$, from whence he infers that Planet opaque and less distant from the Earth than the Sun; they observ'd the immersions and emersions of *Jupiter's* Satellites, from whence ascertain by observations, the distance of *Nippo* and *Chambay*. They Observ'd Latitudes of places for perfecting Geography; the course of Rivers for the same, he speaks of *Gerbillons* Memoirs and Voyages into *Tartary*, and his Map of it; he gives an account of Elephants, Tygres Royaux D'eau, or a fort of one living on Fish like a Cat; the Rhinoceros with his prickly Tongue, eating Branches of Prickly Trees the Chameleon. Strange Monkeys coming near to Mankind. Several kinds of Snakes eat in *Siam* like Eels. An Herbal design'd with 400 Figures to the life in Colours: And so with a Relation of the Pearl Fishery concludes.